

Wethersfield Advisory Parks and Recreation Board
Harbor Management Commission
Minutes - Thursday, November 17, 2016

The meeting was held at Town Hall and called to order by Chairperson Tom Ragonese at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Michael Bisi, Richard Lepore, Tom Mull and Tom Ragonese. Also present were Charlie Forsdick, Harbormaster, Tony Ruggiero, Deputy Harbormaster, and Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation.

A. Public Comments.

Cooper Moreau, a student in Wethersfield, attended the meeting as part of a class assignment to receive information on Wethersfield Cove. He asked what improvements had been made to the Cove.

Harbormaster Charlie Forsdick and board members provided information to him. They explained that the cove and channel had recently been dredged by the Army Corps of Engineers. MDC has a plan in place to eliminate waste being emptied into the Cove. Each year MDC sponsors a cleanup to remove debris from the shore around the Cove. This cleanup is part of the Source to Sea cleanup held along the Connecticut River in the fall. Cooper Moreau thanked the harbormaster and board members for their information.

Cindy and Ken Lesser and Kelly Boucher spoke on the request to have the board support sponsorship of a community theater company in Wethersfield. They presented information to members about the interest in town. They explained that a public meeting was held in September to determine interest and over 30 people attended. They held a second meeting to develop a proposed organizational structure for the company. This information was distributed to board members. They have been working with staff to develop the operational procedures for the company. The company will be self-sustaining and the proposed name is the Red Onion Repertory Theater of Wethersfield (Red Onion Rep). Board members discussed this request and were very supportive of the program. They continued their discussion under the agenda item.

B. Minutes – October 27, 2016.

Mike Bisi moved to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Tom Mull and approved unanimously. Chairperson Ragonese asked the status of the private docks at the 1860 Reservoir. Ms. Bagley spoke with the Town Manager and he is having discussions with the town attorney on this issue. Chairperson Ragonese asked for the follow up information on parking at Montanaro field. Ms. Bagley reported that the police were not supportive of cars parking adjacent to the field because they would be backing into the main entrance road to the park. With the drainage and irrigation work, the contractor did not feel it was appropriate to park adjacent to the field. The cars could do damage to this work.

Chairperson Ragonese asked about the fence work scheduled for Mill Woods Park and where the work orders go when filled out on town website. Ms. Bagley reported that the fencing has not started yet, but is scheduled for next week. The work orders are sent to Physical Services and then distributed to the department responsible for the work.

C. Monthly Report – October, 2016.

Board members reviewed the monthly report. Chairperson Ragonese asked for any comments or questions. Board members discussed the Trunk and Treat special event and the Keane Foundation donation from their carnival in town. All proceeds after expenses will be donated to the town food bank, a very generous donation. Michael Bisi asked if the report has been completed for Cove boating. Ms. Bagley will have the report for their next meeting. Mr. Bisi asked how the pump out station worked over the summer. Ms. Bagley explained that it got the most use this summer and staff will be evaluating how best to use the pump out unit for the next boating season. A question came up about the Nature Center Haunted House not being held this year. The Friends of the Nature Center decided not to hold it this year because in recent years it has not attracted a lot of visitors. There is a lot of competition for this type of event in the area.

D. Letters and Announcements.

1. Holidays on Main Street – cosponsored by the Chamber and Town. It will be held on December 1 from 5 – 9 p.m. A new addition will be the Beer Garden sponsored by the Chamber. The Chamber raises funds for all the attractions at the event.
2. Santa's Pancake Breakfast – sponsored by the Therapeutic Recreation program. It will be held on December 3 at the Community Center from 8:00 – 11:30 a.m.

E. Old Business.

1. Community Theater Program.

See additional discussion under public comments. Board members discussed the request to sponsor this company and provide another program for adults in the community. They felt it was a good program to offer in town and for area residents. Richard Lepore moved to have the Parks and Recreation Department sponsor the community theater company. The motion was seconded by Michael Bisi and approved unanimously. Chairperson Ragonese thanked Cindy Lesser and Kelly Boucher for their work on this program. He and the board look forward to their future productions.

F. New Business.

1. Status Report on Capital Improvement Projects.

Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the report with board members on current projects for the 2016-17 fiscal year. The report provided information on the board's priority requests for this year, what was approved for funding and the status of the projects. Board members were appreciative of all the information. Chairperson Ragonese reminded members that next month they will be reviewing Capital Improvement Project requests for the upcoming budget process for fiscal year 2017-18.

2. Lights in Dog Park.

Ms. Bagley reported that she received a request for lights for the Dog Park.

She explained that the Dog Park was designed not to have lights. Chairperson Ragonese noted that during discussions for the Dog Park it was determined that lights would not be installed at this facility.

3. Induction of William J. Pitkin into the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Hall of Fame.

Ms. Bagley informed board members of Mr. Pitkin's induction into the Hall of Fame. Mr. Pitkin was the first Director of Parks and Recreation in Wethersfield and it is an honor to have him receive this award. Many board members had read the news story about this award.

G. Board Member Comments.

None.

H. Harbor Management Commission.

1. Harbormaster Report.

Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the report with commission members and Harbormaster Charlie Forsdick and Deputy Harbormaster Tony Ruggiero. Mr. Forsdick reported that they are still working on the abandoned sailboat left in the Cove. Staff has followed up on this issue too. Chairperson Ragonese asked when the boat has to come out. Mr. Ruggiero noted that it is 24 hours before the Cove freezes over. However, the boat should be removed before it is too cold to be working outside. The goal is to have the boat out of the water by early December. Ms. Bagley reported that Councilor Hurley could not make tonight's meeting, but in the future would look to set up a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss the harbormaster boat.

Harbormaster Forsdick provided Ms. Bagley with some items to be completed at the Cove for the winter season. He asked that the handicap sign and mat be removed, the area leveled out a little more and the mooring chain and lock be placed on the two buoys on land that anchor the moveable dock.

Ms. Bagley is working on the survey of local harbormasters and will provide information at the next board meeting.

2. High Water Access Policy.

Chairperson Ragonese reviewed the High Water Access Policy developed by the Harbormaster and Parks and Recreation staff. One suggestion was made to the policy by Michael Bisi: add the words safety lighting after traffic barricades. The sentence will read: ...”Traffic barricades with safety lighting will be placed on both sides of the docks in the driveway to protect the docks. ...”. Board members concurred with this addition. A motion was made by Tom Mull to approve the High Water Access Policy with the addition of traffic barricades with safety lighting. The motion was seconded by Richard Lepore and approved unanimously.

I. Motion to Adjourn.

Rich Lepore moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion was seconded by Mike Bisi and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Bagley, Director
Parks and Recreation Department